

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-38 (cancelled).

Claim 39 (currently amended): Apparatus for bonding soft biological tissue having an incision therein, comprising:

forceps adapted to grip a portion of the tissue on both sides of the incision;
electrodes secured to said forceps for contacting said tissue portion; and
an adjustable stop member that limits the extent to which the forceps may be deformed, the stop member being adjustable to accommodate the bonding of tissues of varying thicknesses.

~~an electrical power source for providing a high frequency electrical signal to said electrodes to be passed through said tissue portion; and~~

~~wherein said electrodes are dimensioned relative to size of said tissue portion to be an effective heat sink for conducting heat away from said tissue and thereby prevent sticking of tissue to said electrodes to provide tissue welding that forms a weld to reconnect the tissue.~~

Claim 40 (original): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said electrodes are dimensioned to have a volume which is at least 5 times that of the tissue portion volume.

Claim 41 (original): The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said electrodes are made of a metal with a high heat conductivity.

Claims 42-64 (canceled).

Claim 65 (currently amended): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein ~~said electrodes are secured to said forceps~~ the forceps have two arms, and the adjustable stop member is positioned between the two arms of the forceps.

Claim 66 (new): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises a replaceable lug of selectable length positioned between the two forceps.

Claim 67 (new): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises one or more spacers.

Claim 68 (new): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises an adjustable knob.

Claim 69 (new): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the stop means comprises an electromagnetic drive.

Claim 70 (new): The apparatus of claim 69, wherein the electromagnetic drive is controlled by a computer.

Claim 71 (new): Apparatus for bonding soft biological tissue having an incision therein, comprising:

forceps adapted to grip a portion of the tissue on both sides of the incision;
electrodes secured to said forceps for contacting said tissue portion; and
stop means for selectively limiting the extent to which the forceps may be deformed.

Claim 72 (new): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises a replaceable lug of selectable length positioned between the two forceps.

Claim 73 (new): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises one or more spacers.

Claim 74 (new): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises an adjustable knob.

Claim 75 (new): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises an electromagnetic drive.

Claim 76 (new): The apparatus of claim 75, wherein the electromagnetic drive is controlled by a computer.

Claim 77 (new): Apparatus for bonding soft biological tissue having an incision therein, comprising:

- forceps adapted to grip a portion of the tissue on both sides of the incision;
- electrodes secured to said forceps for contacting said tissue portion; and
- a stop member that has two selectable levels for limiting the extent to which the forceps may be deformed.

Claim 78 (new): The apparatus of claim 77, wherein the forceps have two arms, and wherein the stop member comprises a lug, a pin, and spacers placed between the two arms of the forceps, the stop member further comprising an electromagnetic drive that adjusts the position of the pin.